



News Release

Contact: Martin Ackley, Director of Communications, (517) 241-4395

State Receives First MOU for Federal Race To The Top Application

December 22, 2009

LANSING – State Superintendent of Public Instruction Mike Flanagan received today the first Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) from a local school district for the state's application for the federal Race To The Top.

Signed by the local superintendent, local school board president, and local teachers' union president, the MOUs are commitments from school districts to implement the state's innovative education reform plan. They will be included in the state's Race To The Top application as indication of support by local school districts of the state's plan.

The first MOU was sent in by Oxford Community Schools, and was signed by Superintendent Dr. William Skilling, school board President Colleen B. Schultz, and Oxford Education Association (OEA) President James Gibbons. The Oxford Board of Education approved it on a vote of 7-0.

"I expect that this is the first of hundreds of MOUs we get from local school districts across the state," said Flanagan. "I'm not surprised that the first one came from Oxford. They are trailblazers in this state for the direction all districts need to be heading."

In his transmittal message, Skilling wrote to Flanagan: "There is tremendous support for this initiative and we have strong support from our OEA leadership. There has never been any wavering on Jim's part. I am very fortunate to work with such a visionary who is the teachers' association president."

Flanagan added that when local superintendents, school board presidents, and teachers' union presidents sign these MOUs, they can feel confident that innovative reforms being implemented will lead to a stronger and more vibrant education system for Michigan's children.

"Michigan will lead this nation with the new education system we are forging," Flanagan said. "There is no lack of courageous leadership at the local school level, and we will begin to see that unfold over the next several weeks."

Many MOUs are being processed through intermediate school districts. The deadline for local districts to get their signed MOU to their intermediate school district is January 7. The intermediate school districts must have all MOUs sent to the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) by January 8, 2010. Public School Academies may send their MOU directly to MDE by January 8.

The federal Race To The Top initiative is a \$4.35 billion competitive grant program for states to implement comprehensive and innovative education reforms. If selected, Michigan would receive upwards of \$400 million for its schools to implement the education reform plan.

###